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FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NURSING EDUCATION¹

OBJECTS AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

THE Committee which presents the following report was first appointed by the Rockefeller Foundation in January, 1919, to conduct a study of "the proper training of public health nurses." It was, therefore, the pressing need for more, and for better nurses in the field of public health, that first suggested the desirability for such an investigation. It soon became clear, however, that the entire problem of nursing and of nursing education, relating to the care of sick as well as to the prevention of disease, formed one essential whole and must be so considered if sound conclusions were to be attained. A year later, in February, 1920, the Foundation requested us to broaden the scope of our inquiry to include "a study of general nursing education, with a view to developing a programme for further study and for recommendation of further procedure. We have attempted, therefore, to survey the entire field occupied by the nurse and other workers of related type; to form a conception of the tasks to be performed and the qualifications necessary for their execution; and on the basis of such a study of function to establish sound minimum educational standards for each type of nursing service for which there appears to be vital social need.

CONCLUSION I

That, since constructive health work and health teaching in families is best done by persons: (a) capable of giving general health instruction, as distinguished from instruction in any one specialty; and (b) capable of rendering bedside care at need, the agent responsible for such constructive health work and health teaching in families should have completed the nurses' training. There will, of course, be need for the employment, in addition to the public health nurse, of other types of experts such as nutrition workers, social workers, occupational therapists, and the like. That as soon as may be practicable all agencies, public or private, employing public health nurses, should require as a prerequisite for employment the basic hospital training, followed by a post-graduate course, including both class work and field work, in public health nursing.

¹ Dr. C. E. A. Winslow, Professor of Public Health, Yale Medical School, Chairman, Miss Josephine Goldmark, 270 West 94th Street, New York City, Secretary of the Committee on Nursing Education.

CONCLUSION II

That the career open to young women of high capacity, in public health nursing or in hospital supervision and nursing education is one of the most attractive fields now open, in its promise of professional success and of rewarding public service; and that every effort should be made to attract such women into this field.

CONCLUSION III

That for the care of persons suffering from serious or acute disease the safety of the patient, and the responsibility of the medical and nursing professions, demand the maintenance of the standards of educational attainment now generally accepted by the best sentiment of both professions and embodied in the legislation of the more progressive states; and that any attempt to lower these standards would be fraught with real danger to the public.

CONCLUSION IV

That steps should be taken through state legislation for the definition and licensure of a subsidiary grade of nursing service, the subsidiary type of worker to serve under practicing physicians in the care of mild chronic illness, and convalescence, and possibly to assist under the direction of the trained nurse in certain phases of hospital and visiting nursing.

CONCLUSION V

That, while training schools for nurses have made remarkable progress, and while the best schools of today in many respects reach a high level of educational attainment, the average hospital training school is not organized on such a basis as to conform to the standards accepted in other educational fields; that the instruction in such schools is frequently casual and uncorrelated; that the educational needs and the health and strength of students are frequently sacrificed to practical hospital exigencies; that such shortcomings are primarily due to the lack of independent endowments for nursing education; that existing educational facilities are on the whole in the majority of schools inadequate for the preparation of the high grade of nurses required for the care of serious illness, and for service in the fields of public health nursing and nursing education, and that one of the chief reasons for the lack of sufficient recruits, of a high type, to meet such needs lies precisely in the fact that the average hospital training school does not offer a sufficiently attractive avenue of entrance to this field.

CONCLUSION VI

That, with the necessary financial support and under a separate board or training school committee, organized primarily for educational purposes, it is possible, with completion of a high school course or its equivalent as a prerequisite, to reduce the fundamental period of hospital training to twenty-eight months and at the same time, by eliminating unessential, non-educational routine, and adopting the principles laid down in Miss Goldmark's report to organize the course along intensive and coördinated lines with such modifications as may be necessary for practical application; and that courses of this standard would be reasonably certain to attract students of high quality in increasing numbers.

CONCLUSION VII

Superintendents, supervisors, instructors, and public health nurses should in all cases receive special additional training beyond the basic nursing course.

CONCLUSION VIII

That the development and strengthening of University Schools of Nursing of a high grade for the training of leaders is of fundamental importance in the furtherance of nursing education.

CONCLUSION IX

That when the licensure of a subsidiary grade of nursing service is provided for, the establishment of training courses in preparation for such service is highly desirable; that such courses should be conducted in special hospitals, in small unaffiliated general hospitals or in separate sections of hospitals where nurses are also trained; and that the course should be of eight or nine months' duration, provided the standards of such schools be approved by the same educational board which governs nursing training schools.

CONCLUSION X

That the development of nursing service adequate for the care of the sick and for the conduct of the modern public health campaign demands as an absolute prerequisite the securing of funds for the endowment of nursing education of all types; and that it is of primary importance, in this connection, to provide reasonably generous endowment for University Schools of Nursing.